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SENATE APPROVES FUNDING FOR NORTH DAKOTA MILITARY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) --- The U.S. Senate voted 96-4 Thursday to fund \$31.4 million for military construction projects in North Dakota. U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan said the funding includes important new military initiatives in the state.

"The full Senate gave a vote of confidence today, for the important work accomplished by the men and women on our military bases in North Dakota," said Dorgan, who worked to secure the funding as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "With this funding the bases and missions in North Dakota will continue their role as a vital part of our national security, and important new improvements will be added."

Following is a list of funding for new military initiatives in North Dakota:

- ! **Family housing at Minot Air Force Base and Cavalier Air Force Station:** \$19.5 million to construct new family housing at these two North Dakota Air Force facilities.
- ! **Minot Air Force Base Ramp Extension:** The legislation includes non-binding language urging the Air Force to request funding for the project in the President's FY 2002 budget. Because of a shortage of space at the current facilities, B-52's are now parked at two separate locations, putting a strain on support crews and security forces.
- ! **Wahpeton Armed Forces Reserve Center:** \$10.96 million to construct a new Armory for Company B of the 142nd Engineer Battalion, which is now serving in Kosovo. The existing facility -- which is nearly 50 years old -- is in poor condition and too small to meet current needs, much less what will be required in the future now that a new Marine Corps Reserve is due to be assigned to it.
- ! **Arm/Disarm Pads at Hector Airport in Fargo:** \$900,000 to build pads the 119th Fighter Wing will use to arm and disarm its F-16 fighters.
- ! **Operation Walking Shield:** \$300,000 for the "Operation Walking Shield" program which will move excess houses from military bases to Indian reservations with serious housing shortages. Some reservations in North Dakota are among those to receive the homes.

Dorgan said Air Force bases in North Dakota will soon see new construction projects funded under last year's bill get underway. The Grand Forks Air Force base has awarded \$18 million in contracts to expand aircraft parking aprons and to construct new military housing. The Minot Air Force base has awarded a \$10.7 million contract for new military housing from funds appropriated last year.

The Military Construction Appropriations bill must be reconciled with the House version of the bill before going to the President to be signed into law.

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